

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 12960 252202Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 USPS-01 OC-06 CCO-00
OIC-02 PER-05 MFLO-05 /056 W
-----113717 261115Z /14

R 252148Z AUG 78
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3555
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

UNCLAS GENEVA 12960

DEPT FOR EB/TD, IO/TRC, IO/EX/IR

DEPT PASS USPS

E.O.11652:N/A
TAGS: ETEL, AORG, UPU, US, BR
SUBJECT: UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION: CALL ON UPU OFFICIALS

1. THE MISSION'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS ATTACHE AND ITS INTERNATIONAL PLACEMENT OFFICER CALLED ON UPU DIRECTOR GENERAL M. I. SOBHI (EGYPT), DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL THOMAS SCOTT (UK), AND PERSONNEL DIRECTOR PAUL KLOSSEK (FRG), ON 23 AUGUST. THEY HAD THREE-HOUR CONVERSATION WITH LATTER TWO AND ONE-HALF HDUR COURTESY CALL ON SOBHI. HIGHLIGHTS OF CONVERSATIONS FOLLOW:

2. EIGHTEENTH UNIVERSAL POSTAL CONGRESS - CONSULTATIONS: SOBHI BELIEVES DISCUSSION WITH U.S. POSTMASTER GENERAL WOULD BE ADVISABLE THIS FALL WHEN SOBHI WILL BE IN U. S. ON OTHER BUSINESS. FOLLOWING TRIP TO RIO DE JANEIRO REGARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONGRESS THERE, SOBHI WILL TRAVEL TO NEW YORK WHERE HE WILL ATTEND A MEETING FROM 30 OCTOBER THRU 1 NOVEMBER. HE WOULD THEN
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BE FREE TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE POSTMASTER GENERAL, AND WOULD CLEARLY WELCOME AN INVITATION TO DO SO. PLEASE ADVISE.

3. U. S. CITIZEN EMPLOYMENT: PROBLEM OF LACK OF ANY U. S. CITIZENS ON UPU INTERNATIONAL BUREAU STAFF WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH. ACCORDING TO SCOTT, MAIN PROBLEM

IS THAT, AT LEAST SINCE HE ASSUMED OFFICE 1 JAN 75, NOT ONE U. S. CANDIDATE HAS BEEN PUT FORWARD. HE AND KLOSSEK RECOGNIZE DIFFICULTY POSED FOR U.S. BY REQUIREMENTS THAT CANDIDATE SPEAK AND WRITE FRENCH AND THAT HE COME FROM POSTAL ADMINISTRATION.

4. UPU CONGRESS - SITE: SOBHI SAID THAT BRAZILIAN HOSTS HAD PICKED CONFERENCE SITE CONSIDERABLY AWAY FROM CENTRAL RIO DE JANEIRO. IT WILL BE 20-MINUTE DRIVE WESTWARD, ON ROAD NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION, FROM NATIONAL HOTEL. (FIRE DAMAGE HAS BEEN CLEARED FROM NATIONAL BUT IT WILL APPARENTLY NOT BE IN CONDITION TO SERVE AS CONFERENCE SITE.) BRAZILIANS WILL FERRY DELEGATES TO AND FROM CONFERENCE SITE BY BUS. SCOTT EXPECTS TO VISIT RIO IN SECOND QUARTER OF 1979, ALSO REGARDING PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS.

5. UPU CONGRESS-TECHNICAL COOPERATION ISSUE: SOBHI AND SCOTT DESCRIBED DILEMMA IN WHICH UPU FINDS ITSELF ON THE ISSUE OF REGULAR BUDGETARY RESOURCES BEING USED FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION. THEY FULLY UNDERSTAND RATIONALE FOR USING UNDP RESOURCES FOR THIS PURPOSE. HOWEVER, THEY FORESEE PRESSURES TO USE UPU'S REGULAR BUDGET FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION DUE TO REALITIES OF PRIORITY SETTING IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. (SOBHI SAYS HE HAS WITNESSED PROCESS IN ACTION.) PROBLEM IS THAT HEAD OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PTT IS OFTEN JUNIOR MINISTER WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO CABINET AND HEAD OF STATE. HE HAS DIFFICULTY COMPETING WITH BACKERS OF MORE VISIBLE PROJECTS LIKE ROADS, AGRICULTURE, OR EDUCATION FOR SLICE OF UNDP PIE. OFTEN PTT MINISTERS ARE RESERVED INDIVIDUALS WHEREAS ADVOCATES OF OTHER PROJECTS ARE ASSERTIVE. IF, AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, TRANSPORTATION, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, AND POSTS CDME UNDER ONE MINISTRY, POSTS MAY BE SQUEEZED OUT BY OTHER TWO. NO AMOUNT OF JAWBONING BY UPU TO NATIONAL POSTAL OFFICIALS TO LOBBY WITHIN OWN GOVERNMENTS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN CHANGING THIS STUBBORN REALITY. QUESTION, THEN, WAS WHETHER UPU SHOULD REMAIN PASSIVE OR WHETHER IT SHOULD SEEK ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION (BY USING REGULAR BUDGET FUNDS FOR TC).

6. MISSION COMMENTS:

A. WE HOPE DEPARTMENT/IO IN COOPERATION WITH USPS WILL ACTIVELY SEEK CANDIDATES SATISFYING BOTH LANGUAGE AND ORIGIN REQUIREMENTS ALLUDED TO ABOVE. THIS COULD INCLUDE ANNOUNCEMENTS IN WIDELY CIRCULATED USPS PUBLICATIONS.

B. ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION ISSUE, WHAT SOBHI AND SCOTT SEEMED TO BE SAYING WAS THAT U. S. SHOULD NOT ASSUME THE ISSUE WOULD GO AWAY. THEY CLEARLY HOPE WE WILL GO TO THE 18TH CONGRESS PREPARED TO DEAL FLEXIBLY AND PRODUCTIVELY WITH ISSUE. VANDEN HEUVEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELECOMMUNICATION, POSTAL SERVICE, LABOR UNIONS, DEBRIEFINGS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GENEVA12960
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780349-1141
Format: TEL
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780824/aaaaaubp.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e737105c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1624095
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION: CALL ON UPU OFFICIALS
TAGS: ETEL, AORG, US, BR, EG, GE, UPU, (SOBHI, M I), (SCOTT, THOMAS), (KLOSSEK, PAUL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e737105c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014